

area are described in this work and members of the Club in our area ought to be on the watch for them. Among these are *Gleditsia triacanthos* f. *inermis*, *Lupinus perennis* var. *occidentalis*, *Tephrosia virginiana* var. *holosericea*, *Desmodium nudiflorum* f. *foliolatum* and f. *personatum*, *Amphicarpa bracteata* var. *comosa*, and pale-flowered and white forms of *Trifolium pratense*.

### Muenschler's Poisonous Plants of the United States\*

G. T. HASTINGS

Plants that we have regarded as friendly, or at least as harmless, are revealed in this book by Professor Muenschler of Cornell University as treacherous enemies that may injure us or our domestic animals. The first section of the book deals with the nature of plant poisons, classifying them as skin irritants, as the cause of photosensitization in animals that eat them, cyanogenic plants, seleniferous plants, or of half a dozen other types. By far the greater part of the book is taken up with descriptions of several hundred plants known to be poisonous—"all the vascular plants of the United States known to cause poisoning when eaten, by contact, or by mechanical injury to man or animals are included." The arrangement is botanical, by orders and genera. For each plant the botanical characters, range, poisonous principle, symptoms of poisoning and treatment is given. About a hundred plants are listed as causing dermatitis, but only a dozen of these affect many people. Others such as ailanthus, Queen Ann's lace or wild carrot, buttercups, Alsike clover, and sheep sorrel, are troublesome to only a few people or under unusual conditions. Possibly if it were generally known that *Cypripediums* cause dermatitis very frequently, it would help in conserving these beautiful flowers. The prevention of poisoning by the species of *Rhus* and the treatment to be followed after poisoning are given in detail.

Many of the plants described poison animals that eat them, but are rarely eaten if other food is available, and the great majority are seldom or never eaten by man. It is surprising to find sorghum, lily of the valley, iris, marsh marigold, Dutch-

\* Poisonous Plants of the United States. Walter Conrad Muenschler. xvii+266 pages. 75 plates. The Macmillan Co. 1939. \$3.50.

man's-breeches, wild mustard and other common plants included in the book, but one need not fear these as long as he does not eat the plant or the particular part containing the poisonous principle.

This book may be considered as a companion volume to Medsger's *Edible Wild Plants*, also published by Macmillan. Some plants,—bracken, cowslip, ground cherry, mandrake, to name a few—are listed in both books. In some cases the plant is edible if cooked and poisonous if eaten uncooked; in others unripe fruits are poisonous, ripe ones wholesome. This is the only up-to-date book on the subject of poisonous plants, is as complete as it is possible to make it, written so as to be intelligible to everyone, and attractive with its many illustrations. Several hundred references to the literature, mostly articles in journals and government and state publications are given.